ON PIGEON RIVER. Prize Story.

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The Black Cat

May 1899

On Pigeon River.
$250 Prize Story.
Jeanie Drake.

The Dutchman's Mine.
Harry B. Tedrow.

In the Service of the Czar.
Walter Laurence Hackett.

Miss Wilmarth's Little Luncheon.
Margaret Dodge.

A Thousand Deaths.
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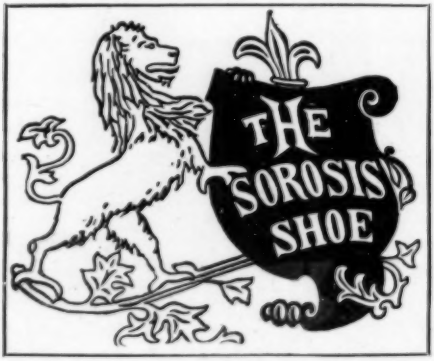

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On Pigeon River.*

BY JEANIE DRAKE.

WHEN Lieutenant Richard Carroll reached the mountain district in North Carolina to which he had been sent, it was with hourly temptation to swear over what he felt to be the proverbial wild goose chase. A needle in a haystack — a spring of water in the ocean — might be as easily found as a deserter in these, his native wilds. In the presence of the two men specially detailed with him for this service it was his not to reason why, his but to do — his superior's orders, if he could — but, in any case, to maintain a respectful, soldierly silence concerning them. With Corporal Brown, however, a man to be trusted, he could let himself out a little.

"In the name of Heaven, Brown," he cried ruefully, when they were alone together, after rations and quarters for all had been arranged in the old mill, "what are we here to do! To waste time as we have been wasting it for the last week, tramping over a country where no railroad has ever been, into every manner of gap and hole and thicket, up and down, round and about, hither

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and thither, and not a soul among these stupid natives able to guide or even give us a word of direction!"

"Not willing, maybe," said Brown, drily, "but able enough. They're not so stupid as they look. You see, lieutenant, these here mountaineers ain't noways in favor of the war. They ain't got no cotton, and they ain't got no slaves. They don't give a darn for the Confederacy nor States' rights. Nor they don't give a darn for the Union, neither. All they want is to be let alone up here on their mountain tops, to play quoits with horseshoes and hunt and chew tobacco and drink whiskey, and watch their women diggin' and hoein' and spinnin' and weavin' and workin' generally for them. And to conscrip' them and haul 'em down to a flat country to be set up as a target in another man's quarrel, with nary a rock or hill to get behind — that ain't their notion of fightin' and strikes 'em as hard usage."

"All the same," said the lieutenant, looking thoughtfully at the remains of their supper of corn bread and greasy cabbage, "if we find this fellow, he'll be shot. Fill your pipe; the tobacco's pretty fair. The Confederate service is that scarce of men just now, that we can't let even an unwilling mountaineer desert in the face of the enemy, without making an example of him for the good of the rest of the homesick slouching lot. But first catch your hare, of course; and while this particular hare goes doubling and winding through the Blue Ridge and keeping just out of reach, our men are, maybe, having another good fight down by Wilmington — and we not in it — and they laughing at us. Confound Bedloe!"

And he kicked the smouldering logs in the fireplace, and they sent up a shower of sparks, crackling and sputtering, which prevented his hearing the door open without any conventional warning; and when at a word from Brown he turned, a girl stood in the doorway. She was young and slim, but quite tall and looked awkward in such short, limp, calico skirt as she wore. It was blue, home-dyed, and exposed bare, sunburned ankles and feet. Her features were at first hidden by a lank sunbonnet of the same stuff as her dress, but when she presently took it off and twisted it in her hands, both men were struck and puzzled by a likeness to some one, but whom they did not remember.

"Well, my girl, what is it?" asked Carroll.

Gazing at him with perfect directness and after the leisurely bovine manner of the mountaineer, she took her time to answer. He had begun to feel amused, yet restive, under her stare when she said:

"Air you-uns the captings of this yere troop?"

"I command the squad; yes."

"I been a-thinkin'"— after another pause and stare, "thet you all 'ud need vittles. Folks round yere's mostly gone — an' their cattle."

This was a state of things familiar to her hearers since they had made their entrance to this rampart of hills through the Gap below. As at a sound rabbits scuttle into their holes in a warren, so at rumor of the soldiers' approach had each cabin and field been deserted, and the domestic animals likewise hidden somewhere. But for a stray chicken or an occasional wandering "razorback," anything but sparse grazing on chance vegetables would have been impossible.

"Why do they run away? We mean no harm to any of you," said Carroll impatiently.

"They ain't a-knowin' thet," replied the girl, simply. "Thar's a few ole men an' boys lef to conscrip'. Anyways I stayed on; for you-uns kaint hurt me much — sence you took away my twin."

"Your twin? What's your name?"

"Marthy Ann Bedloe."

The men's eyes met. Bedloe was the deserter they were after — a boy of eighteen. The likeness was clearly recognized now.

"Them's my bread an' cabbage," said she, waving her bonnet at the table. "Your men came over to my place an' up an' took 'em. I'd best sell you what I can, I reckon. I got sorghum an' eggs, ef you-uns 'll buy 'em."

"I'll see to that," said Carroll, "and pay you for the supper."

He put a Confederate bill into her hand which she took without thanking him and her eyes still intent upon his frank face and well set-up uniformed figure. He noticed that the hand was slim, though brown and work-roughened, and that she had abundant auburn hair and soft, dark eyes with long lashes, and he said as much to Brown, after she took herself very slowly away.

"Yes," said Brown, indifferently, "but she'll be like all these mountain women, the dickens of a hag at thirty. Bedloe's well enough in looks — her twin she says — and I believe her, for he's her image; but as useless, awkward a galoot as ever I saw, and never could be learned to wash his face or carry arms straight. He'd be a good riddance to his company; only, if we have much more riddance, there'll be no company."

"I — don't — much — like the idea of hunting her brother under her eye. We might go further up the river."

"Take my advice, lieutenant," said Corporal Brown, "and make this headquarters. We've got at last into his own country and among his kin. He's most apt to be lurking round here somewhere."

So they settled into quarters at the old mill, from which the miller and his family had fled up the mountain; and for some days now grew familiar with the great rugged eminences towering calmly and silently above, and the lovely banks and green hill-slopes and valleys of the Pigeon. Carroll, with a soldier's quick resource, made himself comfortable in the miller's one living room, which Brown shared with him; the two privates sleeping in the mill-shed, dusty and piled with bags of corn. But by day he had the premises pretty much to himself, for each morning Corporal Brown went forth with the men, rarely returning until nightfall and leaving unexplored no log cabin nor tobacco house nor stable nor cattle shed through these mountains. In this he did better relying on his own knowledge of the region, in which he had once before travelled, than when an occasional uncouth ox-driver or lank mule-rider in butternuts was found to guide; for then, from impenetrable surface stupidity and hidden suspected craft came furious exasperation, and such evenings saw Corporal Brown return to the mill in a frame of temper which his men learned to respect and shun.

During these absences, Lieutenant Richard Carroll, anxious as he was to be rid of this job and again with the army, fared passably well. By temperament a lover of the grandly beautiful in nature, his surroundings would impress and thrill anew each day one from the low country pine-flats. So cordial he found this crisp, cool air that he would stop in his tracks to throw back his

head and square his shoulders and breathe it in with conscious exhilaration. Then Marthy Ann Bedloe would watch him with a responsive smile which only reached and softened her eyes.

"You look pretty peart," she broke out on one of these occasions, "an' I been a-worryin' because I ain't hed no milk to give you. Hed to sell the cow when Hank was took off."

"Was he all you had?" asked Carroll, looking across the road, down a hollow, to where her little clearing with its forlorn log hut showed scant and miserable against the grand background of crag and sky.

"Yes, we-uns is orphins, an' twins. He could plough an' plant better'n me. We hed a older brother — died o' measles down in the army. Name was Aurora Boralis. Our mammy named him; purty, ain't it? Her own name was Mourning Walker Bedloe."

"Name of her family, Walker?" idly watching how the long lashes actually cast a shadow.

"No-o-o. She jes' took thet ar name when she hed conviction o' sin. Like's if this here yearth was jes' a vale o' sorrow. But she tole me she done danced at her own infair; an' she ust to set a mighty heap o' store on dippin'. I ain't never danced in my life. An' I ain't hed no snuff to dip — sence Hank went."

"It would be a pity," said Carroll, "to spoil those white teeth with tobacco." And was recalled to himself by seeing a crimson rise and spread under the tan of round cheek and neck. "It seems to me," he remarked, abruptly changing the theme, "that there ought to be trout in that river," transferring his gaze to the pellucid, dancing water, rippling and eddying on its way over shining rock and clear, transparent depth.

"Thar's oodels o' fish. I ain't no great hand at catchin' 'em; but I kin take you where they's thickest. An' my chickens I been a-fryin' for ye is mos' gone, an' turnips too."

Then her helpful but unconventional comings and goings which had necessitated an occasional bolting of the door on which she never knocked, were varied by fishing excursions led by her. When all were supplied with breakfast, which she cooked as well as brought over, and the corporal's party started, Carroll would get an improvised line and spend most of the day whipping the stream,

wandering up and down its charming banks, above and below the forks, finding, under the girl's direction, clear pools here and there and shady deeps. Sometimes he was full of the angler's exultation at playing and landing at last a lusty, wily, all but unconquerable speckled victim; while at other times he was content, in the glorious September weather, to sit dreamily for long spaces without a tug at the line, his eyes feeding unconsciously on the beauty of shining, rushing, crystal-clear water and fern-clad rocks and green hill and forest, and his thought wandering far. His guide would stay patiently near in either case, with hardly a word for hours, motionless almost as one of the rocks in steady unwavering observation of him. This, at first annoying, came to be little regarded and herself scarcely more than a feature in the landscape, in which her blue cotton gown was a value. Then, with basket full or not, a sharp mountain appetite would at last remind him that he had had but a little lunch, and that it was supper-time. Then she would trudge ahead of him again, over foot-log bridge or, where there was none, wade through some shallow ford, skirt kilted high, her shapely ankles gleaming and splashing through the wetness.

"Ef you ain't used to trampin'," she said with a wistful note, "I guess you gits clean wore out. I wisht now I hadn't burnt the canoe for firewood. But sometimes, I jes' ain't got spunk to cut no more wood — sence Hank went."

"You mustn't cut a stick while we're here," he said commandingly, and she nodded her head in submission. He began to hew diligently at a tree outside on this occasion, while he wondered a little, as the sun dipped down and flashed a last ray or so from behind the peaks, at Brown's unusual lateness. But when the moon presently came up, and yet no sign of the returning party, he was too hungry to wait; but took his supper where Marthy Ann had spread it on the miller's bare pine table. She came in and out, building up the fire, straightening things scattered, clearing the table afterward. Then, when he thought her finally departed to her cabin, came back suddenly in a disconcerting way she had, and found him risen and filling his pipe and gazing meanwhile at an ambrotype he had set up on the mantelpiece.

"Thet thar some one you knows to your place?"

"Yes."

"Looks like you thought right smart of her. She ain't — bad lookin'."

"I am to be married to this lady some day." Then to himself — "when this cruel war is over."

She gazed long upon the pictured sweet and gentle face, but said no more. Only, whereas she had made an unregulated clatter in her previous ministrations, she now moved with curious stillness and closed the door so softly after her that he did not know when she went.

Very sleepy at last, he turned in, still wondering at the corporal's delay; and had had his first nap when the quick, sharp yelp of Marthy Ann's dog across the road waked him. He got up and looked out, expecting to see the party; but no one was in view along the moonlit road, and from the back door of the hut, which had no window, he heard her quiet the cur. Then her figure appeared in the front entrance and he drew back instinctively. She looked long at the mill, then stepped out and, crossing the road, picked up her skirt and waded into the ford. It was so late in the night that the moon, round and full, rode overhead and gave almost perfect light. Why, he hardly knew, but already in shirt and trousers, he only waited to take belt and pistols and was quickly out of the door and on her track. He lingered a moment in the shadow of the great, idle mill wheel, but she did not here look behind her, emerging from the ford on the other side and disappearing into the wood. He waded in at once, the sound of his coming drowned in that of the stream dashing over rocks — and entering the forest close behind her managed to keep her in sight along the narrow trail. At first she would sometimes turn and look, but he instantly stood motionless in shadow; and after a while, feeling secure, she stopped no more, but kept her way steadily and swiftly. Now did his recent tramping stand him in good stead, for the road began shortly to ascend and the climb was a rough one. Twice when his foot struck a stone which rolled, did he await discovery, but she paid no heed now, thinking doubtless that it was some small wandering creature of the night.

On she went, panting a little now, higher and higher, and he was wondering if they would cross the mountain. But, when

nearly at the summit, she turned to her left, making her way through an almost impenetrable thicket. Whatever the object of this expedition, it struck him as a courageous one for a mere girl alone in the night in this desolate place. Suddenly she gave a soft whistle, like a young partridge's call. An answering whistle came from a short distance ahead and she pushed on a few steps farther, where, from an overhanging rock cavern, a form advanced to meet her and said: "Thet you, Marthy Ann? I was afeard you wasn't a-comin'."

Nearly at the same moment, Lieutenant Carroll laid one hand on his shoulder, a pistol in the other hand, and said: "You are my prisoner, Hank Bedloe." The deserter made a movement towards his gun leaning in the cave entrance, but stood still again, feeling the cold muzzle of the pistol. "Marthy Ann!" he cried; and she, stunned for a second by the shock of dismay, would have reached for the weapon, but Carroll, swerving with his prisoner, stood between her and it.

"Marthy Ann," said he, "you must go ahead of us down the mountain and lead the way back. I have two pistols; but there is no need to threaten. You must see there is no help for this thing." She paused, but: "Forward!" said the lieutenant, shortly and sharply, and, with a sort of broken sob, she turned to go back the way they had come. Never would Richard Carroll forget that midnight descent of the mountain-side under the moon. If a suddenly snapped twig, or a stone disturbed, made him start at the thought of ambuscaded rescue lurking in the shadows, his mind was oftener full of pity for this wretched brother and sister — the girl his own willing and kindly handmaid for these past days.

"It was my duty to take him, and I have taken him. The rest is no affair of mine," said soldierly nature within. But as her slender figure moved down the pathway ahead, he could still fancy the dumb, animal, moving appeal of her eyes. So kept the inner voices jangling and tormenting him; but his hand was firm on his pistol and his eye, keen and steadfast, covered deserter and guide alike.

After an interval long or short, he scarcely knew, so full was it with whirling thought, once again he heard, through the universal

nocturnal stillness, the rippling and rushing, the murmuring and dashing, of the Pigeon over its rocky deeps and shallows, and once again they came forth singly from the shadow of the wood, and forded the shining, singing river. On its farther bank Carroll paused a moment.

"Halt!" he said, his voice just higher than the Pigeon's cadences. "Go home now, Marthy Ann, and to bed. I will see that he has some food before he sleeps."

With a look at her brother, and a movement as if she would have touched him, she went in obediently at her narrow door.

Startlingly like her was this slouching twin brother when the lieutenant could see him anew by candle and firelight. Even the little rings that curled on her brow and neck were alike waving about his, escaping from the wretched old hat he never thought of removing. He had the same mute softness of the eyes, and, with more than her slow awkwardness, he looked even younger. He devoured avidly and clumsily the fragments of the supper the officer gave him, and tumbling down on the sheepskin to which he was directed was quickly asleep.

His captor, fully dressed now and wrapped in his cloak, sat near or paced the floor until the night wore away. With day's first beaming over the mountain tops appeared the corporal's party, after long pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp, it seemed; and Corporal Brown in a state of irritation only to be soothed at news of the quarry ensnared behind his hand.

"That's some satisfaction," he said vindictively, "for all the briers and mud holes we've been tramped through on an all-night fool's errand. If I'd a known the boy that offered to take us 'straight to Bedloe' was some far off kin of his, I'd a mistrusted that he was leadin' us away from here a purpose; and I'd have taught him something before he gave us the slip at last. Well, we've got the fellow, and when do we start, lieutenant?"

"After your men rest a bit. We can take the road this afternoon, and march all night with the moon we'll have. The sooner the better."

The prisoner was now in the mill room where the corporal's men already snored, and Brown guarded him for the hour. Punctual to her time, Marthy Ann brought over the hot pone and

hominy and chicken of the breakfast; and Carroll, coming in after, found her gazing at his ambrotype which he had accidentally left out of his pocket whence he had taken it during the night.

"She's moughty purty," said Marthy Ann and gave it to him. Then she stood at the opposite side of the hearthstone, bonnet in hand, facing him just as he remembered her at first, but pale this morning.

"Ther ain't no sort of a chance for him — no sort of a way?" she asked slowly.

"I'm not his judge," he said gently, "he has to be tried first."

"But you know. It's just shootin' him to pieces, ain't it, when you-uns gits him down thar?"

He would have lied but felt it useless, knowing she must hear sooner or later. She looked out a minute where the great water-wheel's idle bulk crossed a window; then her eyes travelled back to his face: "Hank an' me you see, we'se twins, an' all the fambly thar is. It'll be sort o' lonesome 'ithout him." Then she went away in her lingering fashion.

After noon, all being in marching order, the two privates sentinelled the mill door outside. The officers spoke within in an undertone. "The sister must see him alone for a while, Brown," said the lieutenant, with a side glance, "say a half-hour. We can wait in the inner room, and the men at the door. It is quite safe. There is no window and no other way out."

So the compelling pathetic eyes gave Marthy Ann a last interview with the twin brother with whom she had worked and played through their short life. The time having expired, the lieutenant, with some noise, opened the door between. The boy stood with his head and face against the piled-up grain bags. The girl, hastily and awkwardly taking her hand from his, and putting her apron to her eyes under the drooping sunbonnet, went out without a word, crossing the road at once to her cabin and thence to the woods behind, with evident desire to hide her hurt, like all wild things, in denser solitude.

"Forward! March!" The deserter walked from the mill, absolutely unsoldierly, in lagging, uneven gait. The little squad took the road, the lieutenant feeling some relief that he had been spared the prayers and tears and sobs of more civilized anguish.

Wondering indeed, though with a certain self-reproach, if certain "humans" as they called them up here, differed much from the cattle or fowl who daily, unconcerned, beheld their mates taken from their side to the slaughter.

"What is it?" he called, at some delay, and found that Bedloe wished to remove the rough, cowhide shoes, painful to his unaccustomed feet. He watched while the boy, seated on a stone, took off the coarse foot coverings, and thought: "His feet are as slim and as brown as Marthy Ann's."

Then, as the prisoner rose, Carroll met his eyes and was confused a moment by their expression of extremest terror. The next, Bedloe sprang past the men and was already quite a distance down the road, his bare feet pattering, before the corporal's gun was levelled and he was calling: "Fire! Fire!" Speeding after the fugitive whizzed a pursuing flight of bullets. He was now above the ford at a point where the water was swift and deep, but here he plunged in, and, half wading, half swimming, slipped and scrambled among the sheltering rocks, partly submerged, against which the balls scattered spray.

"If you let him reach the other side," warned the lieutenant, "he'll get away." And one of the soldiers, dropping on his knee and taking careful aim at the figure sliding from one rock to the next, fired. The deserter fell over upon the face of the rock and the rushing water rolled his body to and fro. The men waded in and brought him out, hanging limp between them.

"Dead?" asked Carroll.

"Still breathes, lieutenant."

"Bring him in to Marthy Ann's."

They laid him on a small bed, gay with patchwork, now rapidly crimsoning, and the soldiers went back to pick up their guns. Corporal Brown, seeking to discover the source of a thin stream of blood down the cheek, drew off the hat firmly wedged over the brow, and down came a long coil of waving, auburn hair.

"Oh!" he said, and with the hand of a father of girls instantly fastened it up, covering it again with the hat.

There was absolutely nothing to be done but moisten her lips, death being so near. She opened her eyes and looked into Carroll's face.

"'Taint no use to foller. He's too fur off by now."

"No — no — we will not. My poor child!" and he took her hand in his. She smiled with a look of almost content and made the effort to lay her blood-stained cheek against it.

"She's moughty purty," she whispered, "an' you thinks a heap of her, I allow."

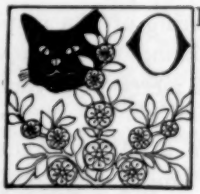
Then she quivered slightly throughout her shattered young body, and the spirit was gone.

"You see, it's this way, lieutenant," said Brown, raising himself up and rather avoiding his superior's eye, "'tain't no manner of use to go ramblin' these mountains after a boy we'll never catch, now that his sister ain't here. The men think we have him and can bury her as such. You can tell the colonel; but the example to the regiment will be the same. If you'll just give orders about the grave, I'll tell the men that we'll bring the — body — ourselves. It's light."

So it came about that one of the privates stuck a bit of wood, on which he had whittled "Hank Bedloe," over the grave of Marthy Ann near the banks of the Pigeon, in which the tender waterwillows dip and flutter and the lusty trout go leaping to-day as in that last wonderful summer of her life.

The Dutchman's Mine.*

BY HARRY B. TEDROW.



OF the numerous cañons cut through the mountain ranges of northern Colorado, few retain their original beauty. Here, as everywhere, the ruthless hand of man has marred the perfect work of nature. The granite walls and sloping mountain sides still keep their awful grandeur; the waters tumble and toss along their rocky beds, but the white-hooded peaks look down in sorrow upon the changes wrought since man came to make his home beneath them.

Once the mountains were green with spruce and hemlock and pine from the water to the snow, but the eager hunter of the early days, with unpitying hand, fired the tinder-like forests to scare forth the game, and vast tracts were always denuded before the flames burned themselves out. In such places the quaking aspens have sprung up and done their best to throw a mantle over the naked slopes and hide the shameful sight of charred and rotting timber. Here and there from amidst their ever-rustling leaves bristles a blackened trunk, tall and pointed like a spear, as if defying the power that laid its fellows low, and struggling bushes and vines attempt to coax back the glory that is gone.

In this respect Laughing Cañon is a fortunate exception. Lying somewhat apart from the region of the early settlements, it escaped molestation for years after the other regions had been tramped over and prospected. When the inevitable discovery of gold did occur, the rush was made to the source of the stream and came chiefly across the range from Black Hawk, although a fairly passable road was soon worn up the cañon from its mouth.

By whom or from what particular circumstance the cañon received its name has long since been forgotten. Some trace it to Indian legends, and say that a once mighty Piute chief, who

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murdered his faithful squaw and through remorse became insane and killed himself, is here doomed to haunt forever the scene of his crime, and that upon still nights, when the moon is full, and just as it sinks behind Mount Ogalalla, his maniacal laugh may be heard above the waters' sound, echoing up and down the cañon walls. Others who hold to the Indian origin attribute the naming to a more agreeable source. They tell us this was the home of the peaceful corn-god, and that after the gathering of the summer's crop all the neighboring tribes camped along the narrow banks of the stream, danced and ran and made merry with each other.

This version seems the best, for no one from Sunlight Creek down professes ever to have heard the ghostly laugh, while only to enter the cañon is to realize the foundation for the other theory. The very air is charged with mischief. The waters laugh and shout as they race among the rocks they have worn so smooth. The great overhanging boulders are water-carved into wrinkled faces of old men and ancient dames, who make grimaces, wink, and smile at you as you pass beneath them. They are always jolly, these old people, always joking with each other, and ready to laugh outright at the droll expressions their companions assume. Up the cañon a mile or so, where the stream is slowly wearing a deep bed, a ledge leans over to watch the work. The figure is that of a scrawny old gnome, with pointed cap and shaggy hair, who is so convulsed at the waters' pranks that he fairly holds his sides. A little farther on a snoring giantess lies stretched upon a cliff. Her face protrudes from a huge sunbonnet and an uprooted pine tree bends down to tickle her upon the nose.

No one remembers trouble in Laughing Cañon. The spirit of jollity seizes the traveler as soon as he passes Smiling Gate, where the cañon really begins.

Even the mules that draw down the heavy wagon loads of ore to the mills at Boulder prick up their ears and become mischievous when Laughing Cañon is reached.

Among the first to visit this charmed place were three men who drifted over from Black Hawk. They were prospectors, of course, and with pick and shovel made a vigorous exploration of the surrounding country in search of the rich lead which had been struck

at Sunlight before they arrived. They began the sinking of a shaft on the mountain side a hundred feet above the roadway. Good nature is essential in all work, and in none more so than in mining. It needs self-control to keep an even temper in slow and tedious working through solid rock. The fault in Laughing Cañon lay in too much good nature. Only one of the men was old enough to claim the gravity which is supposed to go with years, and his gray head and venerable beard were no bar to the levity with which all three were constantly possessed. The result was much sport and little mining. Indeed, the intoxicating effect can hardly be withstood by any one, and soberness vanishes so completely that to this day all work in Laughing Cañon is carried on in a half-serious manner.

Their nearness to the roadway gave the three men a glorious opportunity to indulge in pranks, for after the gold excitement began there were many travelers, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, but more often in covered wagons. The cabin, the timbers, and the dump pile of the jovial prospectors were invisible from the road, and many a plodding adventurer they scared out of his wits with a stuffed bearskin or Indian head-dress. One of their favorite pastimes was to sprinkle bits of mica in a trail beside the road to catch the eye of the inexperienced gold seekers. If this trail was followed up over the rocks and bushes, the bearskin and head-dress did much better service. Nothing was greater fun than when some party camped near them for the night. The alarmed victims must have expected each moment to be devoured by the ferocious beasts that made the air hideous with shrieks and howls.

One July day the three men were leisurely working at the shaft. Two above were at the windlass pulling up the bucket as it was filled with rock by the third below. It was one of those gentle days so common in the mountains, when only the creek disturbs the silence and the sky stretches from range to range in one flawless sheet of blue, the sun intolerably hot, but cool in the shadow of any tree or rock, and snow always to be seen. The younger of the three, lazily leaning on the windlass, saw down the crooked cañon a pedestrian coming along the road. The pilgrim had the conventional bundle swung on a stick over his

shoulder, and pick and shovel. Unlike others, however, he did not pursue his course with the dogged air of one having a fixed destination, but stopped at times and craned his neck to look up either side of the cañon. The young man called his companion's attention to the traveler and together they watched him. Several times he put down his bundle, went up among the rocks and peered about. At such times he would pick up a rock or two — sure sign of a prospector. As he neared them and kept intently looking up, the men caught his eye and beckoned to him. He forthwith left the road and came directly to where they stood.

In Colorado during the early days personal appearance was a poor standard for judging a stranger, but a glance at the man who stood before the prospectors on that July day betrayed every secret of his origin and purpose. Where else do such fat, ruddy cheeks and such serious, blue eyes grow, where else do they crop their hair short below the ears or wear such caps, except in the Fatherland? His chubby form was stuffed into blue shirt and jeans that showed but little wear. His pick and shovel were brand new. No further evidence was needed to the two men, nor to the third, who had emerged from the shaft to view the visitor; he was a tenderfoot, landed by some emigrant train at the mouth of the cañon, and who was attracted hither by the marvelous reports of gold discoveries.

"How'd do?" said Tom, the youngest of the miners.

The Dutchman, without altering his grave countenance, nodded to each of the three men separately.

"Which way?" asked Sam, after a few moments of oppressive silence in which the traveler seemed bereft of speech. To any one but a tenderfoot the question would have been needless. Pilgrims of the early West always volunteered such information.

"I pe lookin' for a golt mine," was the reply. "Vere vill I fint one?"

The miners looked each other in the eyes for an instant. Then each turned as if to perform some trivial duty. In reality, it was to prevent an almost irrepressible explosion of laughter. The strain was terrible. They grew red in the face, and a snort from one would have set them all howling. Several minutes passed before they dared look at each other.

This was the opportunity for old Phineas. He was the arch joker of the three. With face as grave as an ancient monk, this unnatural specimen of ripened age could play pranks and practical jokes with an earnestness that disarmed the victim of all suspicion. When the case was particularly choice, Phineas was given perfect freedom with it, and he never disappointed his generous partners. Sam and Tom then awaited with a half-formed laugh in their throats for Phineas to answer the Dutchman's query.

"Friend," said Phineas, in an honest, confidential tone, placing his hand upon the visitor's shoulder, "you are in search of a gold mine. See them two big pines that grow side an' side across the cañon there?"

The Dutchman nodded.

"Six feet behind that 'n on the left you'll find it. That's the place to dig."

"Alright. I vas opliged," and the Dutchman, who had kept his pick and shovel on his shoulder, started off.

"Wait, friend," said Phineas. "There's no use hurryin'. Stay an' eat with us; it's purty near dinner time."

"I cannot," answered the Dutchman, picking his way down the rude path. "I pe in a hurry."

When he had disappeared the three miners went into convulsions. Their pent-up laughter broke forth in screams and howls. They rolled upon the ground. They pounded it with their fists. They shook and kicked, and, in fact, acted like madmen. The performance was repeated the following day, when they beheld a pile of fresh-turned earth beneath the left of the two tall pines and saw with every reappearance of a cap from behind great boulders come crashing down into the stream. The Dutchman was at work.

During the next two months Sam, Tom, and Phineas laughed themselves fat at the ever-increasing dump on the opposite mountain side, and at the hundred and one things of the Dutchman's doing that a field-glass could reveal. Harder work might have reduced the miners in flesh, but they were victims of Laughing Cañon's spell, and the joke which was daily working itself out before their eyes was worth the whole summer's labor. The Dutchman never paid them a visit. He was too busy digging his mine. They

never visited the Dutchman. It was too much trouble and too far down to the creek and up the opposite side.

. . . . . .

"There's some one at the Dutchman's," said Tom one day in the early autumn.

The yellow and scarlet leaves had begun falling from the quaking aspen and sumac, making bare the mountain slopes. The field-glass was brought out, but nothing more than the presence of a stranger at the little cabin across the cañon was ascertained. Phineas, of course, came out of the shaft, the glass was passed from hand to hand, and a good half-day wasted. The next day neither stranger nor the Dutchman was to be seen. Sam and Tom accepted Phineas's theory, that the stranger had persuaded the Dutchman that he was wasting his time, and the two had gone off together.

Two weeks passed, when one morning the Dutchman again stood before them. There were the same ruddy cheeks, the same cropped hair, and the same serious, blue eyes, although in the latter a certain twinkle might have been observed which had not been there before. Otherwise, a transformation had been wrought. Upon his round head he wore a broad-rim felt hat. A tailor-made suit of large checked cloth disclosed the outlines of his chubby form. He wore polished shoes, and his fat double chin lay over a white collar. A bright red necktie and yellow gloves completed the figure before which the three men with bulging eyes stood transfixed.

"I haf coom back," began the Dutchman, with an awkward bow, "to gif the shentlemen tanks, and say goot-pye. I haf soldt me dot Katrina mine py de pine trees, an' vill lief. The shentlemen vill findt a box mit groceries on de road pelow, vich I haf prung me from Poulder to gif you. Goot-pye."

He shook hands all around, and started down the path. All three men were too surprised to speak. As he started away old Phineas sufficiently recovered to put the most natural question in the light of the revelation. It came forth with an effort.

"How — how much?" he asked.

"Twenty-fife tousandt cash, mit fifteen per cent. royalty."

That is the history of the discovery of the wonderful Katrina

mine of Laughing Cañon. Millions of dollars have been taken from the shafts and tunnels that honeycomb the ground to a depth of a thousand feet beneath where once stood the two tall pines. The usual stampede was made to Laughing Cañon as soon as the strike in the Katrina was known, but although many paying mines were found, none ever equaled the original discovery. It was not in the nature of things that Phineas, Tom, and Sam should long continue their partnership relation after their last humiliating joke, and each in his own current drifted away into the oblivion of unsuccessful mining. The shallow shaft they dug has long since collapsed, and barberry and tangled vines screen it all from view. Doubtless the spirit of the adventurous Dutchman, wandering in the cañon, hovers over the spot on quiet nights and laughs — if the spirit of a Dutchman ever laughs.

In the Service of the Czar.*

BY WALTER LAURENCE HACKETT.

HE room was dingy and but poorly lighted. Around the long table in its center were gathered the conspirators — the men who had sworn to kill the Czar. A strange looking appearance they made in the flickering candle light; some with fierce faces marked by the bitter lines of hunger and of hate; some with the enthusiastic and wrapt expression of dreamers; others with the cold impassivity of great generals. One of the last mentioned, colder, more impassive than the rest, sat at the foot of the table, facing the President. His manner showed not the slightest nervousness, not the slightest exhilaration. Yet in an hour he meant to betray the men who sat about him to the horrors of a living death, on the bleak plains of Siberia, gaining thereby the lasting favor of his Imperial Master. The blow that would ruin his comrades would make him.

The clock struck eight as the President rose to speak.

"Brothers," he began, "Brothers, we have all sworn the same sacred vows, we have all stood the severe tests of our order — we can all be trusted. It becomes my duty, therefore, to speak out. Our days of plotting are passed, the time for action has come. At last we shall strike a decisive blow for liberty."

He paused, but no one spoke. There was not a sound in the room. Some breathed a little more quickly — that was all. Pointing to a powder keg in a corner, the President continued:

"Our materials are at hand; our opportunity, also. The Czar visits Krasnoé-Seló Thursday —"

The noise of a scuffle in the hall outside the door interrupted him. Several of the men who sat about the table sprang to their feet, the door burst open, and an officer, followed by a squad of soldiers, rushed into the room. In an instant every one of the conspirators was covered by a rifle.

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"You are my prisoners," said the officer, curtly.

"By what right?" exclaimed the President. He alone seemed cool; the rest stood as though paralyzed. Ignoring the President, the officer glanced at the others.

"Line up against the wall," he ordered.

Silently they obeyed him — powerless to resist. The officer turned to his men and gave a sharp order. The soldiers raised their guns and aimed them at the defenceless breasts of the prisoners.

Again the President spoke:

"What do you mean to do?" he cried.

"To execute you at once," returned the officer, coldly. Then to the soldiers, "Take aim. Fi —"

"Stop!"

The cry rang out loud and clear in the deadly stillness of the room and the spy sprang forward from where he stood against the wall.

"Stop!" he cried.

"Get back," said the officer, sternly; but the spy continued to advance. His coldness, his impassiveness, had disappeared; his face was yellow with fear; his teeth chattered; great drops of sweat stood on his forehead:

"No — no — you must not shoot me," he shrieked, "I am of yourselves — I am an agent of the Third Section. It was I who informed against these men — if you kill me it will be murder — murder — murder —" He groveled on the floor at the officer's feet.

The doomed men looked at the miserable wretch with bitter contempt while in the President's eyes there was something that looked like triumph.

"An agent of the police," said the officer, doubtfully. "You have your credentials?"

"Yes — yes," screamed the wretch, tearing a piece of paper from his pocket and handing it to the officer, "it is there — it is there. Ah! my God!"

This last exclamation was one of renewed terror, for the soldiers, dropping their rifles, had sprung upon him, and were binding him hand and foot.

The President stepped forward, with a smile.

"Brothers," said he, to the amazed men, who still stood against the wall, "Brothers, in a great cause, like ours, we cannot be too careful. This little scene was devised to discover what traitors we had amongst us. It has succeeded. You, who have proved faithful, are quite safe."

The men looked at him as though they could scarcely credit their senses; then one or two began to sob, and one man laughed.

"And this spy?" he questioned.

A fierce murmur ran around the room; the men, with one accord, started toward the corner, where the man lay bound.

"Kill him — kill him!" they shouted.

The President raised his hand.

"Stop," cried he, "the man is mine, mine to punish as I see fit. Leave him to me. You will accompany our brother Vassoloff," indicating the pseudo officer, "to a place of refuge. From our friend's admission, we are no longer safe here."

"But —"

"I have spoken," said the President, sternly.

The conspirators turned and silently went out. As the man who had laughed passed the spy he kicked him in the face, and laughed again.

Then the President was alone with the spy. He stood looking at him for a moment, a cruel smile on his white-bearded face. Presently he took from his pocket a long fuse, placed one end in the powder keg, and wound the other about one of the tallow candles, an inch from the burning wick. Then he placed the candle in front of the spy's face, where he could almost touch it, and turning, went to the door. At the threshold he paused:

"Your fate will be a lesson to your fellow-spies," he said — and was gone. The spy heard his steps as he went down the passage; he counted them till they died away in the awful silence of the night. Then he looked at the candle. How long would it take an inch of tallow to burn? The police would not come till nine. Would it last till then? He looked at the clock. Twenty minutes past eight. Would that inch of tallow last forty minutes? If it should not, would being blown up be so painful?

He looked at the candle again; it seemed to melt away before

his eager gaze. He tried to shriek, but could not . . . the bruise on his face, where the man had kicked him, hurt fearfully . . . he became unconscious. . . . He dreamed of his mother, dead years before. . . . He thought that he was a child again and that she had taken him on her lap, and was telling him the old stories that he loved. It was summer, and he could hear the reapers singing. . . . He laughed with happiness.

He opened his eyes. The darkness of the room frightened him, and he tried to call his mother. The gag was still in his mouth, and like a flash the whole dreadful, sickening truth came back to him. The hands of the clock pointed to twenty minutes before nine, and the candle was more than half burned. He shook like a leaf; a dreadful nausea sickened him.

Again he looked at the clock. Ten minutes of nine. The candle seemed to burn slower. Was there still hope? Would the police come on time — would they come on time? He strained his ears to hear their coming, but there was no sound. Good God, would they be late?

It was five minutes of nine. He tried to pray. He was lost. No! At last he could hear the soldiers approaching; but the clock was striking nine. A knock on the door, and the flame had touched the fuse. He watched the spark as it crept, like a snake, across the floor, nearer, nearer, nearer to the keg. He tried to scream. . . . The sound of a door being broken open. . . . The footsteps of men on the passage, outside the door, but the spark had reached the keg. . . . A flash —

. . . . . .

A second later, when the soldiers entered, they saw a sight that frightened even them, used to fearful sights as they were. A dead man, bound and gagged, lay upon the floor. His face was green with terror, his hair snow white, and his eyes red, staring and protruding.

On the floor was the black mark where a fuse had burned, and in one corner was a powder keg — empty!

Miss Wilmarth's Little Luncheon.*

BY MARGARET DODGE.

N a fourth-story hall room, whose bed and wash-stand, masquerading, respectively, as sideboard and parlor organ, proclaimed a metropolitan boarding-house value of inches, a girl sat knitting dark brows over an epistolary bombshell. On its face it seemed quite inoffensive, that sheet of dead-white paper, covered with the thin, spidery writing of an old-school gentlewoman; but for it the girl had left her breakfast untasted, she had even laid aside, after one hurried reading, a certain thick, weekly letter with the Berlin postmark, that she might concentrate her mind to meet the grave situation that the fine Italian handwriting conveyed.

My dear Marion:— I trust that it will in no way inconvenience you if Edith, Alice, and I take luncheon with you to-morrow, that is, Friday, instead of on Saturday, as you so kindly invited us when you were here last Sunday. I should not suggest the change except that it has just occurred to us that the shops close early Saturday during the summer; and you know we go in town so rarely that we feel obliged to spend a whole day when we do make a trip to New York. We will come to the *Globe* office at twelve, so that we can embrace the opportunity to examine the mechanisms of a large newspaper, all of which will prove a novel and instructive experience to us who know so little of the business world. Again, I trust that if it is not perfectly convenient for you to make the change, you will let us know when we come, as we know how precious time must be to one connected with one of the greatest powers of the age. Hoping that we will find you very well this hot weather, I remain,

Affectionately yours,

MARGARET GOODLOE ELLIOTT.

Elliottville-on-the-Hudson, August 25.

"Well," said Marion weakly, dropping the bit of cream-colored paper and staring blankly about the uninspiring room, "if any one had told me that my mother-in-law — that is perhaps to be — and my sisters-in-law — that are perhaps to be — would come

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to lunch with me to-day, of all days, I should have said it was too awful to be true. Something must be done, but what and how?"

Now Marion's potential mother-in-law was by no means the appalling person that this speech seemed to imply. On the contrary, she was a charmingly dainty and kind-hearted little lady, whose fine nature and Southern breeding had prompted her, upon her return from a visit to her student son in Berlin, to call at once upon the young newspaper woman who awaited the sanction of Fred's mother before she would promise to become Fred's wife. She had even invited the girl — whom she found astonishingly unlike the loud-voiced and aggressive young person that her convent-bred mind had pictured — to spend her "Sundays off" at the old colonial house on the Hudson, to which Mrs. Elliott had withdrawn upon the death of her husband, several years ago; and had tried earnestly but ineffectually to accustom herself to the idea of a daughter-in-law — even although she were gentle of voice and quiet of manner — who had studied at a men's college, attended socialistic meetings at slum settlements, worked for her living, and, as a matter of course, had blunted, in the life of restaurants, boarding-houses and newspaper offices, the social tact and housewifely instincts such as the little Southern woman had breathed in with the aromatic odor of the cinnamon roses that grew over the walls of her girlhood's home in old Alexandria. Two things, however, Mrs. Elliott had left undone. While not actually forbidding the engagement, she had never consented to a formal betrothal. Moreover, she had never bridged the gap between Marion's world and her own by partaking of the girl's halting but cordial hospitality; and when, the Sunday before, she had consented to be shown over the quarters of the big newspaper on whose reportorial staff Marion worked, and to lunch with her at the down-town hotel that is the Delmonico of Printing House Square, Marion had felt that the chance at last was hers to prove her acquaintance with niceties of ordering and entertaining. She had even planned every item of her luncheon — a light and simple affair, suited to a warm August day — iced *consommé*, lobster in some form, then no meat, as it was so warm, but a vegetable salad, ices, if her guests wished, and some mild cheese, with iced coffee or Russian tea by way of dessert; and had felt

an anticipatory triumph over the probable effects of the East Indian salad, whose secret she had learned from a famous globe-trotter, and which she always put together with a deftness and certainty of success that pleased her much more than any happy turn of phrase in her writing. All told, the affair would cost her something like five dollars — a trifling amount on Saturday, when, at noon, she joined the long procession at the counting-room window, and in due time received a small, brown envelope, fat with the twenty-two dollars in bills that constituted her weekly salary. But in those occasional weeks when habitual thrift was overridden by sympathies so catholic as to include fresh-air excursions for her washerwomen's children, and for herself olden-time editions of her favorite essayists — in those weeks the sum swelled in importance for six days, until, on Friday, it was bloated to the proportions of a fortune.

To-day was Friday of such an expansive week, and Marion's pocketbook was empty. The situation displayed all the deadly seriousness of farce comedy.

To be sure, there was her father, easily accessible by wire even in the class-room of the Western State University, where he held the chair of Greek. But except in stress of famine or fever how possible to confirm that gentleman and scholar in his ill-disguised distaste for his daughter's year-old departure after the strange gods of journalism?

There were New York acquaintances, well-wishers all, from associates of her boarding-house and newspaper office to the young women doctors and social settlement workers of whom she enjoyed rare, inspiring glimpses in moments snatched from the whirl of work; but to ask that any of these express their fractional friendships in coin of the realm seemed equally impossible to her father's daughter.

As for old-time college intimates with whom she had enjoyed an apostolic community of goods, they were literally separated as far from her as the West is from the East; all except —

"Why, yes, how stupid I am" shuffling over her portfolio until she discovered in one corner a note received the day before from an old preparatory school chum, who, two years ago, had electrified her friends by going on the stage, and who now wrote to Marion

from the boarding-house on Thirty-first Street where she was staying while she rehearsed for the play in which she was to take a leading part. The girl concluded her note with the request that Marion should call and hear an account of her old friend's success. "I haven't forgotten," she wrote, "how good you were to me when I was hard up, and moody, and unhappy, and I want you to rejoice with me at my change of fortune. By the way, there's a little sum of $1.25 that I've been owing you ever since you paid my class dues one day our final year. You've forgotten it, but I haven't, and want a chance to make myself square with you."

Another hurried search in the portfolio resulted in the production of a long sheet of orange office paper, on which Marion inscribed a hasty debit and credit column.

"A dollar and a quarter," murmured Marion joyfully, inscribing that sum on the credit side of her improvised ledger. "Well, that's more than enough for the *consommé*, at any rate. I'll call this very morning at ten, so's to be sure to find her in.

"Now, is there no one else in this big city who can help me out? No—yes—yes, surely Katharine Dana wrote me that she would reach New York last night, go straight to the Young Women's Christian Association, and stay there until she could settle on a boarding-place near the medical school. Katharine isn't awfully well off, but it's a hobby of hers always to keep a dollar on hand for emergencies. This is the emergency, and I know she'll lend that dollar to me. One and a quarter added to one makes two and a quarter. Well, that means the *consommé* and lobster, anyway."

And another row of figures was set beneath those already on the credit side.

"If only I hadn't bought all those foolish things yesterday," she murmured, her eyes resting on several packages lying still unopened on the bureau. "The gloves and the paper I really needed, but that Montaigne — I wonder," with a sudden gleam of hope, "if the old bookseller wouldn't take it back. I've bought lots of things of him, and I can explain somehow; and one dollar and a half more will make — let me see— "

One dollar and a half was added to two and a quarter already on the credit side, making three dollars and seventy-five cents.

"That means I can have the salad, too. I mustn't leave that out, even if I go without the ices and dessert."

Now that she had achieved so much of the menu, however, it seemed a pity to stop just this side of perfection. Was there no paper or magazine that owed her the trifling sum that would provide sherbets, and cheese, and coffee? An examination of her manuscript account revealed the fact that the *Sunday Gazette* of twelve days ago had printed an article of hers, anent "Cash Accounts for Women," a mere scrap, only three paragraphs long, but worth, at the rate of six dollars per column, something like a dollar and a half.

"And that," said Marion, scrawling this last item triumphantly on the credit side of her paper, "added to three dollars and seventy-five cents makes five dollars and twenty-five cents. Eureka! the ices and dessert are mine, with twenty-five cents left over for the waiter, — provided," with a swift glance at her watch, whose hands now stood at twenty minutes past nine, "provided I can collect that money and get back to the *Globe* office in something less than three hours."

With a face no longer knotted in nervous lines, Marion hurried down the three flights to the street, and passed through grimy, rumbling Third Avenue to Union Square. Here she stopped at the nearest hotel, summoned a messenger, to whom she gave a hurriedly scribbled note to the city editor of the *Globe* explaining that she was unavoidably detained for the morning, and then kept on through the tiny park toward East Fifteenth Street, to the pretty office of the Margaret Louise Home. To her somewhat nervous appeal for Miss Katharine Dana's whereabouts, the matron in charge shook her head. "I don't think there is any one of that name here," she said; "but I'll see."

After what seemed an endless interval, she finally announced that Miss Dana had come the night before, and was staying in room thirty-three. "But," she added, checking Marion's joyful thanks, "you won't find her there, for her key is here on the key-board. However," with a glance at the girl's troubled face, "it's just possible that she may be in the Fourteenth Street building, perhaps in the library."

But in the library Marion sought vainly among the alcoves and

inquired with equal futility of the librarian for a short, fair girl, plainly dressed and wearing spectacles. Finally, just as she was on the point of giving up the search, she spied, in a balcony alcove, a figure that looked familiar. It was Katharine Dana, and she was very glad, indeed, to see her old classmate, and very much surprised at her early visit, and — and her last spare dollar had gone to an Armenian refugee. If to-morrow would do —

But to-morrow would not do, and, with some hasty promises for future meeting, Marion hurried out of the library and across to Broadway, where she took a cable car for Thirty-First Street.

In the pang of a disappointment that meant the erasure of Russian tea and cheese from her menu it was a pleasure to reflect that at 10.15 Edith would surely be in, if not still in bed.

Possessed by this cheerful thought, Marion was by no means prepared for the shock awaiting her when, to her inquiries for Miss Kent, the trim maid servant who opened the door declared that there was no such person at the house, and never had been.

A wavering moment, in which Marion mentally pinched herself to make sure of her own identity, served to recall her friend's change of name with vocation. Conjured by the name Delorme, the maid conceded: "Sure, it's here she lives when she's at home, but she ain't at home now. She's just after goin' to the World Theayter on Third Avenue. D'ye know the place?"

Marion did know the World Theater, a respectable old playhouse, that, in spite of its location, was occasionally chosen as the scene where a better class melodrama was, in professional language, "tried on the dog." Not being acquainted with the mystery of its professional entrance, however, Marion wasted at least ten minutes in groping her way into the dusky, gassy recess behind the scenes; and as many more in convincing the Cerberus who blocked her way that her errand was not an application for engagement as "singing soubrette." Nor was the girl by any means assured that his asseveration that "rehearsal was called off and Miss Delorme had gone shopping" was not the stage guardian's equivalent of the society woman's "not at home."

"I must give up the ices," she thought regretfully, as she climbed the stairway to the elevated road, "and they would have

been so refreshing this dreadful day. Well, as long as there is the salad I don't so much mind."

It was twenty-five past eleven when she stumbled into the *Daily Gazette* office, a block beyond the sky-piercing shaft of the *Globe* building, and asked at the counting-room for Miss Wilmarth's envelope.

"It was due last Saturday," she explained to the man in charge; "Woman's Department work, you know."

The man shuffled over a pile of little packets in a drawer before him, and shook his head.

"Sorry, Miss Wilmarth," he said, "but Miss Amory, the editor, was taken sick last week before she had made out her list. I'd like to accommodate you, but it's against the rules. Hope it wasn't much."

"Oh, no; nothing at all; just a trifle of a dollar and sixty cents," said Marion, flushing. "It really doesn't amount to anything."

But in the hallway she murmured: "It amounts to a delicious vegetable salad made after an East Indian recipe."

The credit side of her ledger was now reduced to two dollars and fifteen cents — or barely enough for the *consommé* and lobster.

"But, at any rate, that part of the lunch is safe," she told herself as she picked her way down a narrow street leading out of Printing House Square to the little second-hand book-shop where she had bought her Montaigne. "I've furnished the shopkeeper with a regular income now for months past, and he simply wouldn't dare to refuse to take back the book. Besides, he never stirs out."

And then the girl stopped short, her bulky bundle slipping to the sidewalk, where it carommed against the curbstone.

The door of the shop was locked, its windows were barred, and a knot of crape hung from the door-knob.

In the moment in which Marion stood bewildered among the rows of book-shops, stationers' and "gents' furnishing establishments" that line the dingy, crowded little street a dozen possibilities, all equally dreadful, flashed across her mind. Should she pawn her watch? It was a valuable gold and enameled affair, and Park Row, the New York translation of the "Mont de Piété," was only a few blocks away. The thought of a certain grave young doctor and his inherited intolerance of feminine

Bohemianisms negatived that step. To return to Stuyvesant Square, leaving a note for Mrs. Elliott, in which she should plead sudden illness, was another expedient, which her own dislike of social double dealing as promptly vetoed.

So far as she could decide, there were only two solutions to this sickening problem: One was to invite Mrs. Elliott and her daughters — supposedly as an amusing experience — to lunch with her upon "sinkers" and iced chocolate at a near-by upstairs dining-room, whose cheap bill-of-fare, "surpassing coffee," gaily tiled walls, hung with scripture texts and glittering superfluity of mirrors, attracted every noon hundreds of the women reporters, typewriters, and compositors who worked in the region of Printing House Square. The only alternative was to invite the party to her own boarding-house, where the remains of yesterday's dinner and the morning's breakfast were always served in a form admirably adapted to prevent any patron from ever returning for the midday meal except under stress of semi-starvation. Between these solutions her mind oscillated like a pendulum, while she dragged herself back to the *Globe* office as mechanically as though moved by wires. It was now eight minutes of twelve, and what was to be done must needs be done quickly.

As she stepped into the elevator that whizzed her skyward with a noise like the scriptural roaring of a mighty wind, a fellow-reporter spoke to her.

"What's the matter, Miss Wilmarth? Day used you up? It is a scorcher. Don't you wish you were a man just for this one night only? You know this is the sheet's birthday, and the old man has invited the men of the city staff to a banquet at Delmonico's — ten dollars a plate and all that sort of thing."

Marion nodded, and mumbled some unintelligible reply. To her overwrought emotions that birthday dinner seemed like an actual slap in the face, and the rare tears rose to her eyes, blinding them so that she could hardly see her desk when she left the elevator and climbed by a winding stairway to her corner in the wire-screened circular space that formed a deck-like division of this modern Tower of Babel. As she seated herself, her clearing eyes noticed on her blotting-pad the familar yellow *Globe* envelope, with her own name written upon it.

"Miss Marion Wilmarth," she read apprehensively. "What can it be? Some new trouble? My dismissal, perhaps?"

Upon opening it she read: —

"To-day being the birthday of the *Globe*, the management desire that the members of the city staff should unite in a celebration of this happy anniversary. But as Miss Wilmarth will be unavoidably detained, by circumstances beyond her control, from attending the banquet tendered to the city staff, the management beg that she will accept the enclosed as a means of private celebration."

The enclosed was a check for ten dollars.

. . . . . .

On the evening of the day after her trip to New York Mrs. Elliott wrote to her son in Berlin a long and enthusiastic account of Marion's hospitality of the day before, mentioning especially a wonderful vegetable salad prepared by that young lady, so Mrs. Elliott said, in a manner that would have done credit to the most experienced matron. "Indeed," said the writer, in closing, "in asking for the recipe of the salad — which Marion obtained from a noted Eastern traveler who had been her father's guest — I discovered that for three years she had managed her father's house and entertained the distinguished men that came from all over the world to visit the college where he occupies the chair of Greek. In short, I have learned that she is not merely clever and charming, but that she has the social tact and housewifely experience that will enable her to preside with grace and dignity over my son's home.

"Two months ago you asked my consent to your marriage three or four years later, when you should have established yourself in your medical practice in Washington. That I cannot give. But if you will come home at once, marry Marion, and return with her to Berlin to finish your course, you will make your mother and sisters very happy."

A Thousand Deaths.*

BY JACK LONDON.

I HAD been in the water about an hour, and cold, exhausted, with a terrible cramp in my right calf, it seemed as though my hour had come. Fruitlessly struggling against the strong ebb tide, I had beheld the maddening procession of the water-front lights slip by; but now I gave up attempting to breast the stream and contented myself with the bitter thoughts of a wasted career, now drawing to a close.

It had been my luck to come of good, English stock, but of parents whose account with the bankers far exceeded their knowledge of child-nature and the rearing of children. While born with a silver spoon in my mouth, the blessed atmosphere of the home circle was to me unknown. My father, a very learned man and a celebrated antiquarian, gave no thought to his family, being constantly lost in the abstractions of his study; while my mother, noted far more for her good looks than her good sense, sated herself with the adulation of the society in which she was perpetually plunged. I went through the regular school and college routine of a boy of the English bourgeois, and as the years brought me increasing strength and passions, my parents suddenly became aware that I was possessed of an immortal soul, and endeavored to draw the curb. But it was too late; I perpetrated the wildest and most audacious folly, and was disowned by my people, ostracized by the society I had so long outraged, and with the thousand pounds my father gave me, with the declaration that he would neither see me again nor give me more, I took a first-class passage to Australia.

Since then my life had been one long peregrination — from the Orient to the Occident, from the Arctic to the Antarctic — to find myself at last, an able seaman at thirty, in the full vigor of

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my manhood, drowning in San Francisco bay because of a disastrously successful attempt to desert my ship.

My right leg was drawn up by the cramp, and I was suffering the keenest agony. A slight breeze stirred up a choppy sea, which washed into my mouth and down my throat, nor could I prevent it. Though I still contrived to keep afloat, it was merely mechanical, for I was rapidly becoming unconscious. I have a dim recollection of drifting past the sea-wall, and of catching a glimpse of an up-river steamer's starboard light; then everything became a blank.

. . . . . .

I heard the low hum of insect life, and felt the balmy air of a spring morning fanning my cheek. Gradually it assumed a rhythmic flow, to whose soft pulsations my body seemed to respond. I floated on the gentle bosom of a summer's sea, rising and falling with dreamy pleasure on each crooning wave. But the pulsations grew stronger; the humming, louder; the waves, larger, fiercer — I was dashed about on a stormy sea. A great agony fastened upon me. Brilliant, intermittent sparks of light flashed athwart my inner consciousness; in my ears there was the sound of many waters; then a sudden snapping of an intangible something, and I awoke.

The scene, of which I was protagonist, was a curious one. A glance sufficed to inform me that I lay on the cabin floor of some gentleman's yacht, in a most uncomfortable posture. On either side, grasping my arms and working them up and down like pump handles, were two peculiarly clad, dark-skinned creatures. Though conversant with most aboriginal types, I could not conjecture their nationality. Some attachment had been fastened about my head, which connected my respiratory organs with the machine I shall next describe. My nostrils, however, had been closed, forcing me to breathe through the mouth. Foreshortened by the obliquity of my line of vision, I beheld two tubes, similar to small hosing but of different composition, which emerged from my mouth and went off at an acute angle from each other. The first came to an abrupt termination and lay on the floor beside me; the second traversed the floor in numerous coils, connecting with the apparatus I have promised to describe.

In the days before my life had become tangential, I had dabbled not a little in science, and, conversant with the appurtenances and general paraphernalia of the laboratory, I appreciated the machine I now beheld. It was composed chiefly of glass, the construction being of that crude sort which is employed for experimentative purposes. A vessel of water was surrounded by an air chamber, to which was fixed a vertical tube, surmounted by a globe. In the center of this was a vacuum gauge. The water in the tube moved upward and downward, creating alternate inhalations and exhalations, which were in turn communicated to me through the hose. With this, and the aid of the men who pumped my arms so vigorously, had the process of breathing been artificially carried on, my chest rising and falling and my lungs expanding and contracting, till nature could be persuaded to again take up her wonted labor.

As I opened my eyes the appliance about my head, nostrils and mouth was removed. Draining a stiff three fingers of brandy, I staggered to my feet to thank my preserver, and confronted — my father. But long years of fellowship with danger had taught me self-control, and I waited to see if he would recognize me. Not so; he saw in me no more than a runaway sailor and treated me accordingly.

Leaving me to the care of the blackies, he fell to revising the notes he had made on my resuscitation. As I ate of the handsome fare served up to me, confusion began on deck, and from the chanteys of the sailors and the rattling of blocks and tackles I surmised that we were getting under way. What a lark! Off on a cruise with my recluse father into the wide Pacific! Little did I realize, as I laughed to myself, which side the joke was to be on. Aye, had I known, I would have plunged overboard and welcomed the dirty fo'k'sle from which I had just escaped.

I was not allowed on deck till we had sunk the Farallones and the last pilot boat. I appreciated this forethought on the part of my father and made it a point to thank him heartily, in my bluff seaman's manner. I could not suspect that he had his own ends in view, in thus keeping my presence secret to all save the crew. He told me briefly of my rescue by his sailors, assuring me that the obligation was on his side, as my appearance had been most

opportune. He had constructed the apparatus for the vindication of a theory concerning certain biological phenomena, and had been waiting for an opportunity to use it.

"You have proved it beyond all doubt," he said; then added with a sigh, "But only in the small matter of drowning."

But, to take a reef in my yarn — he offered me an advance of two pounds on my previous wages to sail with him, and this I considered handsome, for he really did not need me. Contrary to my expectations, I did not join the sailors' mess, for'ard, being assigned to a comfortable stateroom and eating at the captain's table. He had perceived that I was no common sailor, and I resolved to take this chance for reinstating myself in his good graces. I wove a fictitious past to account for my education and present position, and did my best to come in touch with him. I was not long in disclosing a predilection for scientific pursuits, nor he in appreciating my aptitude. I became his assistant, with a corresponding increase in wages, and before long, as he grew confidential and expounded his theories, I was as enthusiastic as himself.

The days flew quickly by, for I was deeply interested in my new studies, passing my waking hours in his well-stocked library, or listening to his plans and aiding him in his laboratory work. But we were forced to forego many enticing experiments, a rolling ship not being exactly the proper place for delicate or intricate work. He promised me, however, many delightful hours in the magnificent laboratory for which we were bound. He had taken possession of an uncharted South Sea island, as he said, and turned it into a scientific paradise.

We had not been on the island long, before I discovered the horrible mare's nest I had fallen into. But before I describe the strange things which came to pass, I must briefly outline the causes which culminated in as startling an experience as ever fell to the lot of man.

Late in life, my father had abandoned the musty charms of antiquity and succumbed to the more fascinating ones embraced under the general head of biology. Having been thoroughly grounded during his youth in the fundamentals, he rapidly explored all the higher branches as far as the scientific world had gone, and found himself on the no man's land of the unknowable.

It was his intention to pre-empt some of this unclaimed territory, and it was at this stage of his investigations that we had been thrown together. Having a good brain, though I say it myself, I had mastered his speculations and methods of reasoning, becoming almost as mad as himself. But I should not say this. The marvelous results we afterward obtained can only go to prove his sanity. I can but say that he was the most abnormal specimen of cold-blooded cruelty I have ever seen.

After having penetrated the dual mysteries of physiology and psychology, his thought had led him to the verge of a great field, for which, the better to explore, he began studies in higher organic chemistry, pathology, toxicology and other sciences and sub-sciences rendered kindred as accessories to his speculative hypotheses. Starting from the proposition that the direct cause of the temporary and permanent arrest of vitality was due to the coagulation of certain elements and compounds in the protoplasm, he had isolated and subjected these various substances to innumerable experiments. Since the temporary arrest of vitality in an organism brought coma, and a permanent arrest death, he held that by artificial means this coagulation of the protoplasm could be retarded, prevented, and even overcome in the extreme states of solidification. Or, to do away with the technical nomenclature, he argued that death, when not violent and in which none of the organs had suffered injury, was merely suspended vitality; and that, in such instances, life could be induced to resume its functions by the use of proper methods. This, then, was his idea: To discover the method — and by practical experimentation prove the possibility — of renewing vitality in a structure from which life had seemingly fled. Of course, he recognized the futility of such endeavor after decomposition had set in; he must have organisms which but the moment, the hour, or the day before, had been quick with life. With me, in a crude way, he had proved this theory. I was really drowned, really dead, when picked from the water of San Francisco bay — but the vital spark had been renewed by means of his aerotherapeutical apparatus, as he called it.

Now to his dark purpose concerning me. He first showed me how completely I was in his power. He had sent the yacht away

for a year, retaining only his two blackies, who were utterly devoted to him. He then made an exhaustive review of his theory and outlined the method of proof he had adopted, concluding with the startling announcement that I was to be his subject.

I had faced death and weighed my chances in many a desperate venture, but never in one of this nature. I can swear I am no coward, yet this proposition of journeying back and forth across the borderland of death put the yellow fear upon me. I asked for time, which he granted, at the same time assuring me that but the one course was open — I must submit. Escape from the island was out of the question; escape by suicide was not to be entertained, though really preferable to what it seemed I must undergo; my only hope was to destroy my captors. But this latter was frustrated through the precautions taken by my father. I was subjected to a constant surveillance, even in my sleep being guarded by one or the other of the blacks.

Having pleaded in vain, I announced and proved that I was his son. It was my last card, and I had placed all my hopes upon it. But he was inexorable; he was not a father but a scientific machine. I wonder yet how it ever came to pass that he married my mother or begat me, for there was not the slightest grain of emotion in his make-up. Reason was all in all to him, nor could he understand such things as love or sympathy in others, except as petty weaknesses which should be overcome. So he informed me that in the beginning he had given me life, and who had better right to take it away than he? Such, he said, was not his desire, however; he merely wished to borrow it occasionally, promising to return it punctually at the appointed time. Of course, there was a liability of mishaps, but I could do no more than take the chances, since the affairs of men were full of such.

The better to insure success, he wished me to be in the best possible condition, so I was dieted and trained like a great athlete before a decisive contest. What could I do? If I had to undergo the peril, it were best to be in good shape. In my intervals of relaxation he allowed me to assist in the arranging of the apparatus and in the various subsidiary experiments. The interest I took in all such operations can be imagined. I mastered the work as thoroughly as he, and often had the pleasure of seeing

some of my suggestions or alterations put into effect. After such events I would smile grimly, conscious of officiating at my own funeral.

He began by inaugurating a series of experiments in toxicology. When all was ready, I was killed by a stiff dose of strychnine and allowed to lie dead for some twenty hours. During that period my body was dead, absolutely dead. All respiration and circulation ceased; but the frightful part of it was, that while the protoplasmic coagulation proceeded, I retained consciousness and was enabled to study it in all its ghastly details.

The apparatus to bring me back to life was an air-tight chamber, fitted to receive my body. The mechanism was simple — a few valves, a rotary shaft and crank, and an electric motor. When in operation, the interior atmosphere was alternately condensed and rarefied, thus communicating to my lungs an artificial respiration without the agency of the hosing previously used. Though my body was inert, and, for all I knew, in the first stages of decomposition, I was cognizant of everything that transpired. I knew when they placed me in the chamber, and though all my senses were quiescent, I was aware of hypodermic injections of a compound to react upon the coagulatory process. Then the chamber was closed and the machinery started. My anxiety was terrible; but the circulation became gradually restored, the different organs began to carry on their respective functions, and in an hour's time I was eating a hearty dinner.

It cannot be said that I participated in this series, nor in the subsequent ones, with much verve; but after two ineffectual attempts at escape, I began to take quite an interest. Besides, I was becoming accustomed. My father was beside himself at his success, and as the months rolled by his speculations took wilder and yet wilder flights. We ranged through the three great classes of poisons, the neurotics, the gaseous and the irritants, but carefully avoided some of the mineral irritants and passed the whole group of corrosives. During the poison régime I became quite accustomed to dying, and had but one mishap to shake my growing confidence. Scarifying a number of lesser blood vessels in my arm, he introduced a minute quantity of that most frightful of poisons, the arrow poison, or curare. I lost consciousness at

the start, quickly followed by the cessation of respiration and circulation, and so far had the solidification of the protoplasm advanced, that he gave up all hope. But at the last moment he applied a discovery he had been working upon, receiving such encouragement as to redouble his efforts.

In a glass vacuum, similar but not exactly like a Crookes' tube, was placed a magnetic field. When penetrated by polarized light, it gave no phenomena of phosphorescence nor of rectilinear projection of atoms, but emitted non-luminous rays, similar to the X ray. While the X ray could reveal opaque objects hidden in dense mediums, this was possessed of far subtler penetration. By this he photographed my body, and found on the negative an infinite number of blurred shadows, due to the chemical and electric motions still going on. This was an infallible proof that the rigor mortis in which I lay was not genuine; that is, those mysterious forces, those delicate bonds which held my soul to my body, were still in action. The resultants of all other poisons were unapparent, save those of mercurial compounds, which usually left me languid for several days.

Another series of delightful experiments was with electricity. We verified Tesla's assertion that high currents were utterly harmless by passing 100,000 volts through my body. As this did not affect me, the current was reduced to 2,500, and I was quickly electrocuted. This time he ventured so far as to allow me to remain dead, or in a state of suspended vitality, for three days. It took four hours to bring me back.

Once, he superinduced lockjaw; but the agony of dying was so great that I positively refused to undergo similar experiments. The easiest deaths were by asphyxiation, such as drowning, strangling, and suffocation by gas; while those by morphine, opium, cocaine and chloroform, were not at all hard.

Another time, after being suffocated, he kept me in cold storage for three months, not permitting me to freeze or decay. This was without my knowledge, and I was in a great fright on discovering the lapse of time. I became afraid of what he might do with me when I lay dead, my alarm being increased by the predilection he was beginning to betray toward vivisection. The last time I was resurrected, I discovered that he had been tamper-

ing with my breast. Though he had carefully dressed and sewed the incisions up, they were so severe that I had to take to my bed for some time. It was during this convalescence that I evolved the plan by which I ultimately escaped.

While feigning unbounded enthusiasm in the work, I asked and received a vacation from my moribund occupation. During this period I devoted myself to laboratory work, while he was too deep in the vivisection of the many animals captured by the blacks to take notice of my work.

It was on these two propositions that I constructed my theory: First, electrolysis, or the decomposition of water into its constituent gases by means of electricity; and, second, by the hypothetical existence of a force, the converse of gravitation, which Astor has named "apergy." Terrestrial attraction, for instance, merely draws objects together but does not combine them; hence, apergy is merely repulsion. Now, atomic or molecular attraction not only draws objects together but integrates them; and it was the converse of this, or a disintegrative force, which I wished to not only discover and produce, but to direct at will. Thus the molecules of hydrogen and oxygen reacting on each other, separate and create new molecules, containing both elements and forming water. Electrolysis causes these molecules to split up and resume their original condition, producing the two gases separately. The force I wished to find must not only do this with two, but with all elements, no matter in what compounds they exist. If I could then entice my father within its radius, he would be instantly disintegrated and sent flying to the four quarters, a mass of isolated elements.

It must not be understood that this force, which I finally came to control, annihilated matter; it merely annihilated form. Nor, as I soon discovered, had it any effect on inorganic structure; but to all organic form it was absolutely fatal. This partiality puzzled me at first, though had I stopped to think deeper I would have seen through it. Since the number of atoms in organic molecules is far greater than in the most complex mineral molecules, organic compounds are characterized by their instability and the ease with which they are split up by physical forces and chemical reagents.